

Weekly COVID Update, January 10, 2022

Jim Boudreau, Town Administrator

1. The total number of Covid cases for this past week according to our MAVEN (State's reporting system) data was 104. This number does not include home testing that was reported to the Board of Health or school department by parents or individuals. Only tests done by a doctor's office or registered testing site make it into MAVEN. The total number of cases reported to the BOH, including home tests over the last two weeks was 321. We have a positivity rating over the last 14 days at 14.48%, up from the 8.82% of last week. Plymouth County is at 17.41%, more than the 10.59 % of last week. State wide the positivity rate yesterday for the past 7 days was 23.02% going still higher from last weeks at 18.42%. Again, these numbers do not include home tests not reported to the state. We have consistently stated that the number to pay attention to is not the case totals, but the percent positive. This is a more indicative number on where the virus is going. 100 positives out of 10,000 tests is a big positive number, but is only 1% of those tested. 10 positives out of 100 is 10% and a bigger indication of the prevalence of the virus. The positivity ratings are taken directly off the state web site before 9:00 am Monday morning.

Omicron variant is here. Data is that Omicron is significantly more transmissible than the Delta Variant, but that vaccinated individuals with the Omicron variant experience mild to no symptoms and are not hospitalized. At this point, being vaccinated is a much better defense than not being vaccinated, so please, if you have not yet been vaccinated and can receive the vaccine, we urge you to do so. Vaccinations and boosters are widely available. Go to mass.gov for details. The Marshfield Fairgrounds site was taking appointments and drive-ups for boosters. Individuals 18 and over are eligible for a Moderna Booster and 11 and over for a Pfizer booster. You are eligible for a booster 5 months after getting your second Pfizer, 6 months after your Moderna shot, and 2 months after a J&J shot. The CDC last week approved boosters for children 11-15.

Governor Baker issued new guidance in response to the Omicron variant and rising COVID numbers. In response to the spread of the Delta variant and the emerging Omicron variant, the Department of Public Health now advises that all residents, regardless of vaccination status, wear a mask or face covering when indoors (and not in your own home). With the surging number of cases, it is recommended that you wear a mask when you are indoors in a public space for your protection and the protection of others. The DPH particularly urges this recommendation if you have a weakened immune system, or if you are at increased risk for severe disease because of your age or an underlying medical condition, or if someone in your household has a weakened immune system, is at increased risk for severe disease, or is unvaccinated.

A question has been asked about masks mandates in Scituate or in Scituate Town buildings. The Select Board can impose a mask requirement for town buildings, just as the school committee has for school buildings. The BOH can mandate masks town wide

under the existing public health emergency. The Town has consistently, throughout the pandemic, followed the guidance provided by the state for mandates and we will continue to do. Scituate has a high vaccination rate at this point and the state has not imposed a mask mandate for indoor uses. They have posted a recommendation that people mask up indoors regardless of vaccination status and we have posted that on all town buildings.

2. There will be a regional clinic for booster shots this week with Cohasset, Scituate, Hingham and Hull on Thursday January 13th, from 9-1:00 at the South Shore Baptist Church in Hingham. There will be 300 Moderna boosters available. You need an appointment so go to Scituatema.gov and the link for appointments is on the home page. The town has sent an email blast and posted on Facebook already.
3. This morning we were informed of a water leak issue in the North Scituate business district on Gannett Rd. Crews are responding. This may result in a water shut off in that area if repairs are needed. An update will go out when we have more information.
4. This week, on January 13th at 12:00 PM, we will be auctioning off a property at 1 Tilden Road in Minot. This was previously discussed at a Board meeting. The house was taken by the Town for tax title. Details at jjmanning.com.
5. Widows Walk clubhouse: Walk-in freezer has been installed. The RFP for operation of the clubhouse and food service is out with an opening date of 1/18 which is next Tuesday. The flooring installation in the club house portion of the building has started. That is the last big item towards completion. Building is really coming along and will be ready for the start of the golf season.
6. Widows Walk is open for walking, sledding and other winter activities. We ask that you please have your dogs on a leash at all times, avoid walking over any greens or sand traps and most importantly, pick up after your dog. Barrels are available for placement of the dog waste. Have a great winter and we hope you and your dogs enjoy "The Walk."
7. Meteorologists are forecasting bitter cold winds and temperatures for tomorrow. Temperatures could be in the single digits with wind chills well below zero. Please be careful if you need to be out and check on any neighbors who may be at risk.

Tony Vegnani, Select Board Member

Mr. Vegnani asked about the protocol for reporting Covid cases from home tests. Mr. Boudreau said the school is asking that if you home test, please notify the school nurse. Mr. Boudreau said you could let Board of Health know if you test positive from a home test.

Bill Burkhead, Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Burkhead thanked the families who are calling into the school to inform of positive tests. The school numbers are going up and we have captured 174 cases within the district from January 1 – 7, 2022. The good news is that it's spread throughout the district and there aren't any "clusters". Breakdown is as follows and school numbers include both staff and students:

District Staff	3
Cushing	19
Gates	26
Hatherly	18
Jenkins	21
Scituate High	63
Wampanoag	24

Mr. Burkhead said the state sent test kits for the staff prior to returning to school last week. All staff were given the opportunity to test on Sunday and he gave a huge shout out to his Executive Assistant Kim Peters and School Nurse Leader Kelli Roche. They picked up the tests and arranged for staff to pick up. Over 71% staff volunteered to test and 12 positives came from that effort. He thanked all the staff for coming in.

Mr. Burkhead gave a "Sailor Shout Out" to our custodians and to the town for their storm clean up and for all their hard work to get the schools ready for return.

Congratulations to Herb Devine, Division IV coach of the year, and congratulations to the entire football community.

School Committee Meeting is tonight at 6 PM. Topics include: celebrate student learning, monthly update from SHS Students, student update, program of studies update for next year, new job description for Asst. Athletic position, substitute teacher pay increase request, and Superintendent and Asst. Superintendent reports.

Mr. Vegnani asked everyone to please check on your neighbors with the upcoming cold weather the next few days and to have a great week.